

Appl. No. 09/640,035
Amdt. dated June 15, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 15, 2004

Remarks

The present amendment responds to the Official Action dated March 15, 2004. The Official Action rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Mayer U.S. Patent No. 6,282,511 ("Mayer") in view of Oliver, D. "Netscape 2 Unleashed," Sams.net, 1996, pp. 20-26. These grounds of rejection are addressed below following a brief discussion of the present invention to provide context. Claims 1-9 have been amended to be more clear and distinct. Claims 1-9 are presently pending.

The Present Invention

A system according to an aspect of the present invention provides users the ability to gain access to information and to examine and select various options and choices and to perform various operations and transactions. The options are preferably presented in a variety of formats. These formats are suitably adapted so as to be accessible through different intermediary devices, such as a web page on the one hand and a telephone voice response system on the other hand. The different formats are constructed so that information and choices are presented in similar and coordinated ways, so that the user experiences a similar interface, no matter which intermediary device is used to gain access to the information and choices. In this way, a user who has gained experience with information presented in one format, for example, through one type of intermediary device, will be able to use that experience when using a different intermediary device because the information will be presented in a similar format to that with which the user has gained familiarity.

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The Art Rejections

All of the art rejections hinge on the application of Mayer and Oliver, taken in combination. As addressed in greater detail below, Mayer and Oliver do not support the Official Action's reading of them and the rejections based thereupon should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, the Applicant does not acquiesce in the analysis of Mayer and Oliver made by the Official Action and respectfully traverses the Official Action's analysis underlying its rejections.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-6 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Mayer in view of Oliver. In light of the present amendments to claims 1-6 and 9, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, claims maintaining a web page on the Internet, which presents information, in a visual format to visitors to the web page, the visual format having an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone, and also claims maintaining a telephone call center accessible to callers using a conventional telephone, which presents, in audible format to callers and selectable using inputs that can be produced using a conventional telephone, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation to visitors to the web page so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers to the call center will be similar to the visual format experienced by visitors to the web page. These features are not taught by Mayer. Mayer teaches translation of a hypertext page to audio format, with the user being able to repeat hypertext links after their utterance by the system in order to execute commands indicated by the links, and with the user being able to utter

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command words to perform other functions of the system. Mayer does not teach a visual interface, in this case, a web page, similar to one presented by a conventional telephone, as well as a call center presenting information in an audible format similar to the visual format so that a user of the audible format will experience a presentation similar to that experienced by users of the visual format. The coordination of the visual and audible formats, as claimed by claim 1, as amended, allows a user to gain familiarity with a format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and then to experience a similar format when moving from one format to another, for example from a web page to a telephone interface or vice versa. Mayer, by contrast, simply directly translates a hypertext page to audible format, so that the presentation is more complex and elaborate than that typically presented by a conventional telephone. The present invention, as claimed by claim 1, presents a visual interface that is easily presented in a visual format such as a web page, but is adapted to resemble an interface suitable for presentation by a telephone, and also presents an audible format similar to the visual interface, so that a user is able to move relatively freely between the visual and the audible formats, using the familiarity gained with one format to adapt easily to using the other format.

Adding Oliver to Mayer does not cure Mayer's deficiencies as a reference with respect to claim 1, as amended. Oliver teaches a visual format such as a web page, with a menu of hyperlinks, with selection of a hyperlink giving access to a menu of further options, and with each hyperlink on a main page giving access to an underlying page with further options, with each underlying page presenting different options from each other underlying page. Thus, selection of a first hyperlink gives access to a first set of options, selection of a second hyperlink

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gives access to a second set of options, and so on. Mayer does not teach coordination of visual and audible formats in order to present similar visual and audible formats similar to a format presented by a conventional telephone. Claim 1, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 2, as amended, claims transmitting information which presents visual options, for selection by a remote party, the visual options being presented in a format presenting an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone. The visual options are presented in a sequence which follows a predetermined flow chart. Claim 2 also presents transmitting information which presents audible options, for selection by a different remote party, in a sequence which follows the flow chart. The audible options are accessible by a caller using a conventional telephone and selectable using inputs that can be produced using a conventional telephone, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers will be similar to the format of the visual options presented to the remote party. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format. Claim 2, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 3, as amended, claims means for maintaining a web page on the Internet, which presents, in visual format to visitors to the web page, the visual format presenting an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone, and also claims a telephone call center

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accessible to callers using a conventional telephone, which presents, in audible format to callers and selectable using inputs that can be produced using a conventional telephone, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation to visitors to the web page so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers to the call center will be similar to the visual format experienced by visitors to the web page. As noted above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format. Claim 3, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 4, as amended, claims means for transmitting information which presents visual options, for selection by a remote party, the visual options being presented in a format presenting an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone. The information is presented in a sequence which follows a predetermined flow chart. Claim 4 also claims means for transmitting information which presents audible options, for selection by a different remote party, in a sequence which follows said flow chart, the audible options being accessible by a caller using a conventional telephone and selectable using inputs that can be produced using a conventional telephone, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers will be similar to the format of the visual options presented to the remote party. As noted above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the

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visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format.

Claim 4, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 5, as amended, claims maintaining a web site which visually presents a set of options, the web site presenting an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone. Claim 5 also claims maintaining a telephone answering system accessible using a conventional telephone, for presenting an audible format for presentation of options to a caller, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by users of the telephone answering system will be similar to the format of the visual options presented to visitors to the web site. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver, nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format. Claim 5, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 6, as amended, claims means for maintaining a web site which visually presents a set of options, the visual options being presented in a format presenting an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone. Claim 5 also claims means for maintaining a telephone answering system accessible by callers using a conventional telephone, the format for presentation being similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers to the telephone answering system will be similar to the format of the visual options presented to users of the web site. For the

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reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format. Claim 6, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

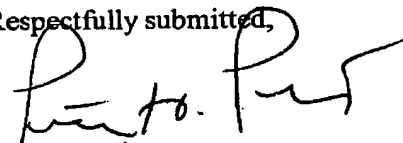
Claim 9, as amended, claims presenting options in a visual format on a web site. The visual format presents an interface similar to one presented by a conventional telephone. Claim 9 further claims presenting options to a telephone caller using a conventional telephone. The format for presentation is similar to and coordinated with the visual format used for presentation so that the presentation of the audible format experienced by callers to the call center will be similar to the format of the visual options presented to visitors to the web site. For the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, neither Mayer, Oliver, nor a combination thereof teaches a visual format similar to one presented by a conventional telephone and an audible format similar to the visual format so that presentation of the audible format will be similar to the visual format. Claim 9, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

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Conclusion

All of the presently pending claims, as amended, appearing to define over the applied references, withdrawal of the present rejection and prompt allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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